

Double Exposure:
Narrative Perspective in Gordimer's
"A Guest of Honour"

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FOR THE MOST PART, critics of Nadine Gordimer's *A Guest of Honour*¹ have approached the novel from the point of view of its politics, although they have drawn different conclusions from their analyses. Robert Haugh, for example, criticizes the naïveté of Gordimer's depiction of the political situation in the fictional African nation where the novel is set;² Elaine Fido, on the other hand, contends that the very predictability of Gordimer's political setting enables her to offer an incisive critique of "paternalism and patriarchal domination."³ Also considering the novel from a socio-political perspective, Abdul R. JanMohamed describes it as a somewhat less than successful "examination of the contradictions of liberal ideology as they are manifested in Bray and in his attitude toward the problems of this country."⁴ And, in his study exploring the relationship between South African history and Gordimer's fiction, Stephen Clingman praises the novel's assessment of the "practical implications [of politics] for subjective life"⁵ and credits it with giving expression to "African socialist realism."⁶ While the value of this kind of critical approach in describing Gordimer's achievement in *A Guest of Honour* is evident, its predominance has meant that surprisingly scant attention has been paid to the formal elements of the novel. More specifically, despite the fact that the relationship that develops between James Bray and Rebecca Edwards becomes one of the strongest forces in effecting Bray's emotional and political rejuvenation, the significance of the shift in narrative perspective which occurs at Bray's death has not been considered.

From the opening of *A Guest of Honour*, the narrative adopts the point of view of Bray, a retired British colonel and a former

colonial officer who returns for the independence celebrations in the African country from which he was expelled ten years previously for co-operating with the independence movement. His stay is extended, partly because he becomes involved in writing a governmental report on education and partly because he is having an affair with Rebecca, a young woman who moves with her three children to Gala, where Bray is based. When Bray is suddenly and horrifyingly killed near the end of the novel, Gordimer's narrative aligns itself with Rebecca's point of view.

The adoption of Rebecca's point of view not only distances readers from the moment of the killing and involves them in the young woman's attempt to explain Bray's death and life: it also redirects the narrative focus inward, toward the private and the personal and away from the political debate which has largely preoccupied Bray. This shift in emphasis provides a way to explore the nature of the close connection between the personal and the political posited earlier in the novel.

In the aftermath of the attack in which Bray is killed, Rebecca is absorbed completely by the physical details of her immediate surroundings. "Gulping and howling like an animal" in the roadside culvert where she has hidden from the assailants (493), she hears in the eventual still silence the certainty of her own safety and, returning to where the burned car and Bray's body lie, she gradually becomes conscious of the heat and the passage of time. With her identification of the incomprehensible "physical inkling" that is thirst, Rebecca begins to grasp the import of Bray's death and of her own survival:

Then for the first time she began to weep. She had begun to live on. Desolation beat down red upon her eyelids with the sun and the tears streamed from her eyes and nose over her earth-stained hands. (495)

Although Rebecca is not again as intensely focused as in these first hours after Bray's death, her perspective remains unrelievedly introspective. The sympathy and explanations offered in the capital by Roly Dando and the Bayleys hang in the air unclaimed, "meaningless against the fact of his death as she had heard it and seen and felt it" (520). Isolated in her grief, Rebecca knows only that she has been "left alive" (505). She searches for the mean-

ing of that knowledge and attempts to understand Bray's death not through reference to the impact of "the forces of history . . . [and] the energies released by social change" (499) but in the context of her personal relationship with him. Her departure for Europe, reversing Bray's return to Africa and re-entry into public life, brings Rebecca into a highly individualized existence in which her attention is given to defining the nature of the commitment between her and Bray and to lamenting his death.

The unrelentingly personal focus of the narrative after Bray's death is not an inconsequential departure from the political focus of the earlier narrative. By aligning her narrative with Rebecca's steadily inward-looking and unapologetically apolitical point of view, Gordimer emphasizes the significance of the relationship between Rebecca and Bray in the earlier part of the novel and calls attention to the way in which Rebecca's presence has not only influenced the course of Bray's experience but has also shaped Bray's perception of his own political and personal rejuvenation.

Rebecca Edwards is introduced to the reader in the early chapters of *A Guest of Honour*, although she remains a minor figure until Bray is compelled to re-evaluate his own presence in Africa. Almost unnoticed in the frenetic socializing of the Independence celebrations, Bray's first meeting with Rebecca occurs at a private party held after the Independence Ball. The fleeting encounter with Rebecca, who is at this point anonymous, contributes to the generalized mood of "immediate casual friendliness" (28) which welcomes Bray. In the days that follow, as the faces around him gradually lose their "stylized, apparition-like quality" (31), he identifies the woman "who had given her glass to him that night" (32) as Rebecca Edwards. Like "a big, untidy school-girl in her cotton shirt and sandals, the car key on her forefinger jingling harassedly" (31-32), she is "in and out of the Bayleys' house, sometimes adding to, sometimes carrying off with her, the many children who played there" (31). Bray's perception of Rebecca, however, is unfocused; since his attention is directed toward the newly-independent nation, she remains, for him, undistinguished from the other members of the amorphous group of whites in the capital.

Yet, although Bray is "drawn helplessly and not unenjoyably into everything around him" (32) and enters willingly into discussion about the nation's political future, he is in Africa only temporarily and so remains an observer of, rather than a participant in, the festivities. He feels "himself as the middle-aged relative, a man of vague repute come from afar to the wedding" (32) and describes himself as a man for whom life will hold no more shocks (46-47). He is conscious of being in Africa by virtue of his past association with the People's Independence Party (P.I.P.) and has come back not to help "to build a nation" (126) but to witness "the attainment of something he had believed in, willed and worked for, for a good stretch of his life" (26). The impression Gordimer conveys through a narrative which aligns itself with Bray's perspective is one of a man who holds himself aloof from his present because he believes he can have no active role in the future. This defining feature of Bray's characterization is emphasized during the private luncheon he attends at the Presidential Residence. While Bray is gratified to discover still in the charismatic Mweta "a friend, intact behind the shifting superimpositions of a public self" (72), he leaves the Residence with "a sense of relinquishment with which, as an interested party, an older person sees a young man launched and going out of sight" (77). Over the course of his stay in the capital, Bray almost consistently views events from the stance of a guest of honour and the "Edwards girl" is no more than a feature of the backdrop against which he sees one of his life's dreams being realized.

However, with Mweta's eleventh-hour offer of an appointment to the "newly-created post" of educational advisor (77), Bray is "moved and excited" (78). Despite having already reserved a seat on a flight back to England, he accepts the position and, beginning to abandon his role as guest, departs for Gala, the large northern district where he served as District Commissioner in the colonial administration. In Gala, Bray will meet Rebecca Edwards again; before that meeting occurs, the Colonel experiences a kind of physical re-awakening which prepares for the development of a sexual relationship between them and for the renewal of his political involvement.

Bray's move to Gala, a process he describes as "coming anew" rather than "returning" (99), evokes from him an intense response to the sensory stimuli about him. His new intensity transforms the sedate image of him that has emerged in the first chapters of the novel. In its place, an image forms of a Bray for whom re-birth is a real, if hitherto unrecognized, possibility. In Gala, Bray rediscovers the "familiar smells of calico, paraffin, millet and dried *kapenta*" (97) and the forgotten sounds of "delicate wild pigeons [calling] lullingly, slender in flight and soft of voice" (102). He begins to "wake up early again, as he used to do in Africa" and is filled with an "irrational happiness" (102). By memory he finds his way about the African township east of Gala where in the "anonymity of mutual acceptance" (103) one's presence is "so simply acknowledged that one [forgets] that outwardly one [moves] as large, pink-faced Englishman" (104). When he begins to travel around the province, gathering census information for his report, Bray's face becomes richly burnished "as if some secretion of pigment, that had ceased functioning in the years he had been away, began to be produced by his body again" (110). Travelling on the lake north of Gala, which stretches "up the continent for six hundred miles and through four or five countries" (100), Bray finds himself in "the strange grip of sensuousity of place" (110). Stronger when he is on the lake, that "strange grip" — a clasp which draws him toward participation in the vitality that surrounds him — embraces Bray everywhere in this Africa.⁷

Yet, despite the force of its pull, Bray persists in maintaining some degree of detachment from the world about him. Falling back on his work which, "unchecked by distraction or interruption, filled his mind" (114), Bray can avoid thinking about the implications of his experience of being claimed by his physical surroundings. Gradually, it becomes evident that Edward Shinza, founder of the P.I.P. and Mweta's political rival, is connected with what lies at the root of the unresolved and mounting tension in Bray between, on the one hand, his immersion in and envelopment by his physical environment and, on the other, his deliberate resistance to that process.

Bray has buried himself in his work because "it is better to concentrate on such practical matters as the possibility of resuscitating the old wood-working and shoemaking workshop in town" (115) than to think of Shinza and the "dissatisfactions, paradox and irony" (114) of the discord between him and Mweta. Bray's position is an awkward one: despite his earlier work with the independence movement, he is convinced that, because of his status as an outsider, he must remain politically neutral in the present situation. Although he is aware of and uneasy about Shinza's absence from the Independence celebrations, Bray has decided "to set himself outside from the beginning" and to avoid "anything that might be construed as political action" (116). Bray suppresses the thought of Shinza and, somewhat naïvely, convinces himself that he can work for Mweta without becoming involved in the ideological conflict between the two men.

Bray's first confrontation with Shinza, however, forces him to question the validity of that position and leads him toward acknowledging that he cannot remain politically neutral. Shinza's "faint, distantly bitter amusement at a spectacle that has ceased to amuse" (127) and his "powerful indifference" (128) to Bray are a challenge to the rationale by means of which the white man justifies his extended stay in Africa. Since his job is "one that needs doing and . . . he perhaps might be better able to do [it] than most people" (79), he accepts it; his action is consistent with an ethical code which asserts that "one was available wherever one was of use" (11). By revealing that the young hitchhiker Bray picked up had been illegally detained and beaten, undoubtedly with official sanction, Shinza compels the Colonel to consider that although such a principle may not be worthless, it might well be inappropriate, especially when Bray's adherence to it becomes a way for him to ignore the fact that he is not, and cannot be, politically neutral.

As well as exposing the falseness of the premise on which Bray's political neutrality is based, Shinza, simply by his physical presence, also poses a threat to Bray on a more personal level.⁸ The images of Shinza's "bare strong feet" and of him holding his infant son "as casually as he had fathered it" stir in Bray "a restlessness . . . in the tamped-down ground of his being, put out a

touch on some nerve that (of course) had atrophied long ago" (138). Driving away from Shinza's home, Bray acknowledges that "Shinza had another kind of confidence, one that [he] was provoked by, not just in the mind, but in the body, in the senses. Shinza moved in his consciousness in images so vivid that he felt a queer alarm" (137-8). Unlike Bray, who has put his active life behind him, Shinza "might as well have been thirty as fifty-four." He is not "an ageing man who [is] like a young man"; rather, he is "driven quite naturally, acceptedly, to go on living as long as he [is] alive" (138). Shinza's powerful physical presence offers an implicit rejection both of the stultifying life Bray expects to return to in England and of the detachment he has attempted to maintain since his return to Africa.

The source of the alarm and restlessness that Shinza causes Bray lies in the contrast of Shinza's undiminished vitality with the life of semi-retirement Bray had adopted in England. The juxtaposition of Shinza (whom "you would have to have . . . drop dead, to stop") with the "death-cult" (138) of the house in Wiltshire clarifies Bray's perception that the choice facing him is between life and death. Importantly, a reversal has taken place in the way in which Wiltshire and the house are depicted. In the novel's first chapter, Wiltshire, which "ought to have been a sad-feeling place . . . wasn't; there was instead a renewal; the country had come back, bringing the reassurance of stubborn peace and fecundity" (8). After his meeting with Shinza, however, Bray's perception has altered greatly:

The house in Wiltshire, with all its comfortable beauty and order, its incenses of fresh flowers and good cooking, its libations of carefully discussed and chosen wine came to Bray in all the calm detail of an interesting death cult; to wake up there would be to find oneself acquiescently buried alive. (138)

Here the symbolic import of fresh flowers, good cooking, and wine is inverted; instead of signalling a life fully and richly lived, the images now disguise, for Bray, a dead and deadening centre: he realizes that he has acquiesced in being "buried alive." This reversal of the way in which Wiltshire is perceived has been initiated by Bray's sense of rejuvenation in returning to Africa, but is effected finally by his encounter with Shinza. Bray's

changed attitude towards Wiltshire points to his dawning realization that "his own sense of life" lies not in England, but in Africa (278).

Significantly, Bray first meets Rebecca in Gala just before leaving for the Bashi Flats when he stops by the *boma* to collect a box of cheroots for Shinza; he encounters her again immediately upon his return. These meetings with Rebecca frame his encounter with Shinza. The relationship between Rebecca and Bray is prepared for not only by his having been physically revitalized in and by Africa, but also by the "moment of pure sexual jealousy" (372) he experiences during his first encounter with Shinza. Moreover, the establishment of a link between Rebecca and Shinza, who has challenged Bray both politically and personally, calls attention to the way in which Bray's progression toward greater personal involvement is paralleled by a movement toward increased political engagement.

Indeed, Bray's sexual relationship with Rebecca is defined from the beginning by elements of both a political and a personal nature. Bray first makes love to Rebecca shortly after returning from his unsettling visit to Shinza. That the act is a response to the personal threat posed by Shinza becomes evident when Bray finds himself thinking, "extraordinarily, . . . of Shinza. Shinza's confident smile. Shinza's strong bare feet. Shinza smoking cigars in the room that smelled of baby" (152). With this thought of Bray's, the sexual act becomes a reaction against Shinza, an attempt by Bray to assert his own vitality.

What seems initially to be an isolated incident between Rebecca and Bray proves otherwise when the affair is begun anew after the latter returns from a trip to the capital, distraught because of Mweta's unexpected announcement of the immediate introduction of a Preventive Detention Bill. Once again, the sexual act is associated with Shinza; this time, however, the connection is of a quite different nature. Implicit in Shinza's first encounter with Bray was a challenge to engage in the present. As the beginning of a relationship that grounds Bray in the present, his making love to Rebecca a second time transforms "the room left behind him and the room somewhere ahead of him in his life" (252) into a room of the moment, and signals his movement toward that

present, toward Shinza. Moreover, Bray talks to Rebecca, afterwards, about Shinza and Mweta, strengthening the connection between personal and political involvement. While the relationship between Rebecca and Bray remains primarily personal, its early association with Shinza and with Bray's dilemma over his response to the conflict between Mweta and Shinza suggests that the distinction between the political and the personal is far from absolute. Just as Bray's personal experience with Rebecca is politicized by the association with Shinza, so his political activity is shown to be rooted in a personal life. That personal life is transformed by the vitality of the African people and environment, a vitality communicated to him, at least partly, through his relationship with Rebecca.

As that relationship intensifies, Bray's perception of Rebecca changes. He no longer sees her as a "girl whose life [overlaps] the lives of others but [is] without a centre of its own" but instead likens her to "those hitch-hikers who let the world carry them, at home with anybody in having no home, secure in having no luggage, companionable in having no particular attachment" (242). Rebecca, and this is part of her appeal for Bray, lives wholly in the present; she is immersed in her surroundings in a way Bray finds it almost impossible to be. The immediacy of Rebecca's physical presence is captured at several points when she is described simply as "there" (252, 303, 338). In part, of course, this adjective merely indicates the extent of Bray's infatuation with Rebecca; but it also hints at something in Rebecca's attitude toward the process of living which is entirely dissimilar from that of Bray. Rebecca's "naturalness," (247) which contrasts sharply with Olivia's fastidiousness, also contrasts with Bray's cautious restraint. Where Bray is introspective and analytical, Rebecca is impulsive and unthinking. Attractive because she is entirely unlike Olivia, or Bray, Rebecca draws Bray into the physical immediacy of Africa, although her whiteness clearly removes her from the world of Shinza and Mweta.

Accompanying Rebecca's non-analytical consciousness is a complete lack of political awareness. Bray's genuine but self-conscious radical liberalism is met by Rebecca's apoliticism. In a discussion about Bray's political neutrality, for example, she rejects the

observer role he is clinging to by naïvely and vaguely insisting “you *are* in it” (262); elsewhere, misunderstanding the ideological issues involved in the conflict between Mweta and Shinza, she advises Bray to tell the President about Shinza’s border-crossings simply because he loves Mweta. However, although Rebecca confesses her own political ignorance, the constant association of her with Shinza in the text is not a specious one, since Rebecca does play a significant, if indirect, part in Bray’s eventual decision to support Shinza. The way in which Bray places Rebecca, Shinza, Mweta and Olivia into a pattern of oppositions and polarities determines, to a large extent, the way he acts and understands his actions.

The meaning of the sets of oppositions in Bray’s mind becomes fully evident to him only after he openly supports Shinza at the Party Congress in the capital. In so doing, Bray places himself solidly in the Shinza camp. And it is Bray’s relationship with Rebecca that has enabled him to commit himself politically. This fact, and the degree to which she has permeated his imagination, become plain when Bray, after carrying out Shinza’s commission, is overwhelmed by a sensory image of Rebecca’s physical being:

In the cupola between the body and the arm he tasted always the sweetly-scentedness of something smeared there to disguise sweat, and the slight gall, as of an orange pip bitten into, of the sweat itself, and his tongue, moving one way smoothly, felt the nap of shaven hair-roots when it moved the other. . . . Rebecca had not been in his mind at all; only this one part of her, suddenly, claimed him with an overwhelming sense of reality of its own.
(370)

Significantly, while Bray is reporting on the results of a backroom political discussion at the Party Congress, he gives Shinza a lighter which was a gift from Rebecca. At the end of the tense public debate that follows, Shinza uses the lighter while on stage and Bray thinks to himself, “That’s my man” (384). The lighter becomes an emblem of the consolidation of Bray’s allegiance to Shinza and of his concomitant opposition to Mweta. Because the lighter, like the car Bray later lends Shinza, originates with Rebecca, the strands of Bray’s personal commitment to her and of his ideological commitment to Shinza are drawn more tightly

together, suggesting once again that Bray's movements toward political and personal involvement are interdependent.

Bray's instinctive linking of Shinza and Rebecca through the lighter anticipates the full articulation of the pattern of polarities and associations that becomes an interpretive model for Bray. Through this pattern Bray represents, to himself, his movement from detachment to involvement, from past to present. Until the Party Rally which concludes the Congress, Bray has separated the political and personal polarities he sees about him. He has kept the personal opposition of Rebecca and Olivia distinct from the political opposition of Shinza and Mweta, a point John Cooke makes in his discussion of the novel.⁹ However, at the Rally, Bray explicitly associates Olivia and Mweta, and sets them against the pair of Shinza and Rebecca:

It made [Bray] uneasy, though, that [Olivia] and Mweta should be linked at some level in his mind. Of course, there was an obvious link; the past. But a line between the stolid walk down the carpark to lobby for Shinza . . . and the presence of the girl — always on him, the impress of a touch that doesn't wash off — could only be guilt-traced. (397)

Bray rejects the imputation of guilt, and asserts that what seems to be a betrayal is in fact his own loyalty to the core of his being:

And guilty of what? I have gone on living; I don't desire Olivia; something over which one hasn't any control; and the things I believe in were there in me before I knew Mweta and remain alive in me if he turns away from them. (397)

This quite sudden articulation of the pattern both defines his perception of his changing relations with Olivia, Rebecca, Mweta, Shinza, and enables Bray to understand the changes that have taken place. These "changes" are the products of an essentially unchanged consciousness. That is, Bray uses the pattern to interpret his experience, to describe his movement from the past into the present as a passage toward greater self-realization. In this light, his political allegiance with Shinza and his involvement with Rebecca are both seen to be inevitable.

Bray's recognition of this pattern seems to be the culmination of the novel's movement toward asserting an indissoluble connection between the personal and the political. But the shift in

narrative perspective which occurs after his death breaks that link. Rebecca, whose point of view the narrative adopts, does not merely dismiss as incomplete or inaccurate those various political interpretations of Bray's death offered her; rather, she simply does not consider politics as relevant to her own experience.

Instead, she acknowledges only the personal implications of her relationship with Bray and of its tragic ending. Unlike Bray, who discovers that even the most private aspect of his life, his sexuality, has a public dimension, Rebecca retreats into absolute privacy in her grieving. In the anonymity of urban Europe, she struggles to comprehend the "pure faceless horror" of Bray's having been "killed like a chicken, a snake hacked in the road, a bug mashed on the wall" (520), to discover in the lines of his note giving details of a Swiss bank account proof that Bray loved her, and to cope with "the deprivation, the loss, the silence, the emptiness, and the finality" (522) of his absence. To some extent, the intensity of Rebecca's focus on Bray mitigates the abruptness of the narrative departure from earlier political preoccupations. Still, the unexpected shift in perspective, and the concurrent redirection of attention inward, remain startling; their significance becomes clear only with the identification in the narrative of the personal basis of Bray's political involvement. This is achieved by duplicating aspects of Bray's experience within the limits of Rebecca's apolitical perspective.

London, Rebecca finds, is "full of faces . . . that [Bray] had chosen not to be" (519). About her as she walks in the city, she sees:

faces in which she could trace [Bray]. An elderly man in a taxi outside a restaurant; even a young actor with sideburns and locks. He might have once been, or become, any of these who were living so differently from the way he did. It was as if she forayed into a past that he had left long ago and a future that he would never inhabit. She wandered the bypasses of his life that he had not taken, meeting the possibility of his presence. (519)

What distinguishes Bray from his compatriots, Rebecca decides, has "something to do with life itself. . . . Bray lived not as an adversary but as a participant" (519). The correspondence between her evaluation of Bray and his earlier description of Shinza

as a man who would "go on living as long as he was alive" (138) suggests that Bray has emulated successfully Shinza's commitment to living in the present. More importantly, because it isolates the private from the public — as neither Bray nor Shinza could do — Rebecca's characterization of the Colonel implies that his life in Africa, his public allegiance to Shinza, his private commitment to Rebecca and his death, are the inevitable consequences of existential rather than political choices.

As the immediate shock of Bray's death recedes, Rebecca becomes aware that she has "begun to live on" (495). The physicality of her re-birth recalls, and so calls attention to, that of Bray's analogous revitalization, pointing again to the origins of political engagement in personal experience. Although Rebecca's journey to Europe reverses Bray's earlier passage from winter to summer, from death to life, and although the moribund nature of Europe contrasts sharply with the extraordinary vitality of Africa, both continents prove to be places where regeneration can occur. Rebecca is not reclaimed by the land as Bray was upon his return to Africa; in Europe, however, she experiences the events of Bray's death and her survival physically, bodily. Rebecca is battered by "hammering fists of anguish [which] ceased for no more reason than they would begin again" (523); images of Gala and of the ambush are branded into her memory, intruding into her consciousness as she watches London street scenes. Her body, in effect, discovers the inevitability of re-birth and renewal. Confronting the "callousness of the earth endlessly renewing itself," she realizes that her own "commonplace desire" would "come back" and that "[e]verything else would come round again; be renewed" (523). While the experience of re-birth for Bray is an exhilarating one, releasing him into the possibility of engagement with the world about him, for Rebecca its inevitability is a terrifying and painful discovery, leaving her isolated and homeless. Despite this difference, the experiences are comparable and the recurrence of the motif of physical regeneration in the later narrative emphasizes the personal rather than the political dimensions of Bray's earlier re-birth.

In part, then, the shift in narrative perspective after Bray's death (to a point of view which, ignoring political or public con-

cerns, mirrors certain aspects of Bray's experience) continues the exploration of the relationship between the personal and the political begun earlier in the novel. By redirecting attention from the political to the personal, the change in narrative focus and emphasis makes it possible to distinguish Bray's personal revitalization from the political circumstances which surround him. While Bray's public allegiance to Shinza is finally a futile gesture against Mweta's neo-colonialism, the separation between the private and the public which is made in the shift from Bray's to Rebecca's point of view prevents a sense of hopelessness from pervading the novel's conclusion. Clearly, Rebecca's vision is limited in its inability to appreciate the historical ironies surrounding Bray; nevertheless, the very limitations of her outlook enable readers of *A Guest of Honour* to evaluate Bray's personal experience beyond the criterion of the efficacy of his political action. In the integration of Bray's perspective (which culminates in a recognition of the interdependence of personal and political commitment) with Rebecca's (which qualifies the apparent futility of Bray's death) Gordimer's novel allows for the possibility of meaningful personal and political engagement even as it depicts the failure of a revolution.

NOTES

- 1 Nadine Gordimer, *A Guest of Honour* (1970. Markham: Penguin, 1973). All subsequent references will be included in the body of the essay.
- 2 Robert Haugh, *Nadine Gordimer* (New York: Twayne, 1974) 145-60.
- 3 Elaine Fido, "A Guest of Honour: A Feminine View of Masculinity." *World Literature Written in English* 17 (1978): 35.
- 4 Abdul R. JanMohamed, *Manichean Aesthetics: The Politics of Literature in Colonial Africa* (Amherst: U of Mass. P, 1983) 113.
- 5 Stephen Clingman, *The Novels of Nadine Gordimer: History from the Inside* (London: Allen, 1986) 126.
- 6 Clingman 127.
- 7 The way in which the African environment effects the transformation of Bray's character is discussed by John Cooke, *The Novels of Nadine Gordimer: Private Lives/Public Landscapes* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State UP, 1985) 131-48. Cooke argues that Bray becomes able to renounce his role as "guest of honour" when he learns to allow "the landscape to inhabit him" (136).
- 8 Identifying the influence Shinza exerts over Bray "as a man," (210) Cooke argues that Shinza is the first of Gordimer's black characters whose power is "primarily due to his personal qualities" (210) and operates "independent of his race" (211).
- 9 Cooke 136.